A patron-strongman who delivers: explaining enduring public support for President Duterte in the Philippines

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Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version
Arbeitspapier / working paper

Zur Verfügung gestellt in Kooperation mit / provided in cooperation with:
Hessische Stiftung Friedens- und Konfliktforschung (HSFK)

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:
Kreuzer, P. (2020). *A patron-strongman who delivers: explaining enduring public support for President Duterte in the Philippines.* (PRIF Reports, 1). Frankfurt am Main: Hessische Stiftung Friedens- und Konfliktforschung. https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-69009-8

1/2020

PRIF REPORT

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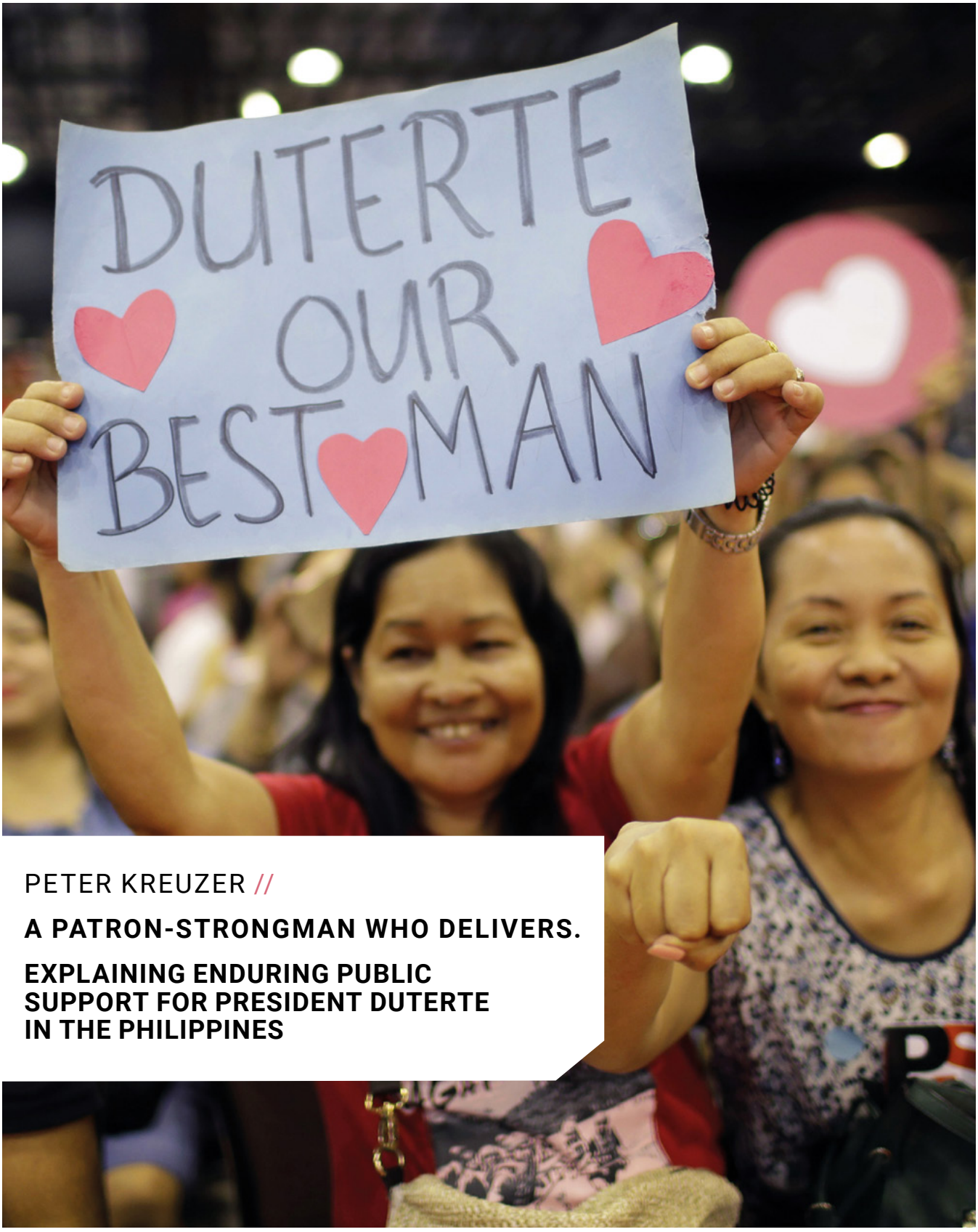

PETER KREUZER //

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EXPLAINING ENDURING PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR PRESIDENT DUTERTE IN THE PHILIPPINES

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IMPRINT

LEIBNIZ-INSTITUT HESSISCHE STIFTUNG FRIEDENS- UND KONFLIKTFORSCHUNG (HSFK)
PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE FRANKFURT (PRIF)

Cover:
A Filipino supporter holds up a sign in support of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte as she waits to meet him in Singapore on Friday, Dec. 16, 2016.
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ISBN: 978-3-946459-53-8

Given that it is killing thousands of its own citizens, undermining crucial political freedoms and threatening the few remaining political opponents by legal and extralegal means, international media and news services view the government of Rodrigo Duterte through the lens of oppression and illiberalism. The Philippines under Duterte withdrew from the Rome Statute, shunned loans from donors voicing human rights concerns and almost withdrew from the UN Human Rights Council in 2019, after a resolution was adopted calling for a probe into the human rights situation in the country.

The liberal democratic narrative of the Duterte government is one characterized by human rights violations, a war on drugs targeting the country's poor, and erosion of the separation of powers and rule *by* law in order to silence critical media and opponents of the government. In the Philippines, presidential candidate Duterte managed to win 40% of the vote with his core message and promise of a tough law-and-order policy combined with a war against crime that would not spare the lives of suspects. This relative majority of votes that secured his election victory became an overwhelming absolute majority of approximately 80% in the first national surveys after Duterte's inauguration and after his war on crime had already become bloody reality. Survey after survey showed that unlike the situation with all prior presidents since the downfall of Ferdinand Marcos in 1986, this level of support neither waned nor was tempered. In recent years the supposedly liberal middle class has supported a government that is remaking the Philippines in a more and more illiberal mold and the poor have stood by a government that kills thousands coming from within their own ranks.

Duterte's core message is one of discipline, iron-fisted assertion of order, and submission to the top strongman's commands. This report tackles the question why such a national leader has managed to win and keep the hearts of the vast majority of Filipinos and Filipinas irrespective of socio-economic class or gender.

It argues that while liberal-democratic in name, Philippine politics has been clientelistic in practice and the leadership personae of patron and strongman leadership have linked political elites and the vast majority of the electorate for the past decades. To the electorate neither patronage nor strongmanship is the problem, but rather the scarcity of *good* patrons and strongmen who fulfill their part of the clientelistic social contract. There is a high level of legitimacy for leadership that credibly fills the promises of both "good" patronage and strongmanship: decisive government *for* the people in exchange for the people's personal loyalty.

With Duterte came one radical manifestation of local Philippine politics, the patron-strongman, became dominant on the national level in an unprecedented way. This precedent was marked by the widely shared understanding that this form of patron-strongman leadership had been successful in satisfying core human needs of the population of Davao City, where Duterte had been mayor for more than two decades: security, order, community development and poverty reduction. In Davao Duterte delivered on the promise of the "good patron" by resorting to the practice of the "good strongman," thus tending to the needs of the vast majority and wiping out resistance to his vision of an orderly society. To his voters, the output and the outcome in Davao were welcome and the opposite of the national situation of perceived lawlessness and drug crime. In addition, Duterte's mantra that peace and order are the foundations of development and the people's welfare sounded convincing.

Based on his widely promoted track record as mayor of Davao City and his promise to transform the nation in the way he had done in Davao City, there, for the first time, Rodrigo Duterte was able to successfully render meaningless the informal requirements that normally apply for achieving success in presidential elections: in-depth socialization in social practices, the rules of the national political game and the etiquette of "Imperial Manila" politics.

While one result of Duterte's war on crime has been the indiscriminate killing of several thousand suspects by police and vigilantes, to the vast majority of the population the outcome has been a reduction in crime and an enhancement of their perceived security. In this sphere, as in the vast majority of other policy fields, long-lasting support for Duterte is founded on the weakness of the prior administrations' performance that has been widely perceived as a failure of liberal democracy in Philippine practice. While liberal democracy has been regularly promoted as being superior on account of its guarantee of individual freedoms and human rights, it lost much of its appeal due to its inability to bring about improvement with respect to the "more basic" human needs of security, welfare and the reduction of poverty and inequality. While Duterte's claim of order and development was initially a promise based on a local example, his core policies – the war on crime, the vast infrastructure initiative and the doubling of the salaries of police and military officers, free tuition at state colleges and other measures – were implemented quickly, signaling a determined and purposeful administration that was pushing for change.

Representing two different sides, both the middle class and the poor have settled on supporting a patron-strongman who delivers, or, in the words of Kusaka (2017b: 49), a "patriarchal boss" who brings together "compassion and violence" and "maintains justice outside of the law."

The Pandora's Box of popularly elected strongman presidents has been opened. Enduring support for Duterte suggests a promising new leadership persona for future presidential candidates. After Duterte the old strategies of marginalizing and ridiculing non-mainstream politicians as country bumpkins will no longer work, as long as the latter can plausibly demonstrate strong and successful leadership. In a similar way, criticism of such leadership as illiberal is bound to fail in the wake of broad public support based on perceived multi-dimensional success. Thus, liberal democratic promises that predominantly focus on individual rights will lose out, if liberal democrats cannot plausibly claim to be able to (better) satisfy the core human needs of security, development and justice.

With the coronavirus outbreak there are no more "safe guesses" about the future of the Philippines after Duterte. A perceived failure in the coronavirus crisis can bring down the whole Duterte enigma; a perceived success of the caring strongman may elevate his leadership persona to the center of Philippine political imagination.

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The online appendix to this report is available for download at: www.hsfk.de/Report0120-Appendix.

1. INTRODUCTION

> "God needed to appoint Duterte in order to get Filipinos to repent" (Pastor Kulius, quoted in Cornelio/Medina 2018).

> "He is a man of and for the people. Yes, he is vulgar, foul-mouthed, and says what he thinks without a filter. But he is also sincere, honest, and hardworking, and he loves the poor and the weak" (Carla from Tacloban, quoted in Obordo 2016).

Since the inauguration of Rodrigo Duterte as President of the Philippines on June 30, 2016, more than three years of a ruthless campaign against drug crime have passed in the Philippines, during which several thousand crime suspects have been killed by the Philippine National Police. Still, the Duterte presidency in general and this war on drugs in particular have continued to be viewed positively by the vast majority of the population – regardless of region, gender and social class.

This report deals with the question why Rodrigo Duterte, who was elected with 40% of the vote, managed to obtain and retain support for his administration and its policies by 80% of the population. In the more than three and a half years since his election, upper middle- and upper-class support (the ABC classes)[1] has broadened, even though recent years have seen an intense debate on Duterte's transformation of the Philippines into an illiberal democracy. The support of the lower classes (the D and especially the E class) has strengthened, despite it being widely known that Duterte's anti-crime campaign predominantly targeted the (urban) poor. Despite this, the middle class seems to have no fear of losing its liberties in a more and more illiberal "new normal," and the poor seem to support a crime-control campaign that almost exclusively targets members of their communities.

This report will provide a straightforward answer to the question how this could happen. The answer rests on three pillars that together underpin the widespread support for Duterte. Two pillars provide the "input"-based foundation of legitimacy for Duterte's style of governance, the third addresses the "output" dimension of his legitimacy. These are 1) patronage or clientelism[2] as a dominant and highly legitimate form of sociopolitical order, provided both sides fulfill their respective role

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1 Class A to class E refer to a widely used categorization of the Philippine population according to socio-economic class. The ABC classes are normally analyzed as one block, even though they encompass a broad panoply from the super-rich to the well-off middle class. Of these the A and B classes comprise approximately 1% of the population and the C class 9%, resulting in a total of approximately 10%. Class D or the "lower class" is estimated at approximately 60% of the population and the poor at 30% (Africa 2011: 14). Class D is defined as "those households who have some comfort and means but basically thrive on a hand-to-mouth existence" (Bureau of Agricultural Statistics 2010: ix).

2 I do not differentiate between patronage and clientelism but use these terms interchangeably. In this usage patronage is the top-down perspective whereas clientelism focuses on the bottom-up perspective of relations between clients and patrons. Both describe asymmetric relationships where various goods are exchanged, with the client providing loyalty, overall support and votes for the patron. This general relationship is expressed in the terminology of patron-client relationships that coalesce into networks. Alternative conceptualizations limit patronage to the provision of benefits that flow from public office. This makes patronage a subtype of clientelism (quote: Hicken 2011. 295). For additional detail, see below, chapter 2.1.1.

expectations; 2) highly personalized, decisive and coercion-based leadership as a legitimate form of rule, again on the condition that (violent) coercion fulfills the promise of order and security. These two dimensions of legitimacy provide the enabling environment in which a politician like Duterte thrives. The overwhelming support for Duterte rests on his credibility as an embodiment of the patron-strongman persona of leadership: i.e., a decisive leader who takes responsibility for his actions and is willing and capable of getting things done and of governing *for* the people. While clearly at odds with liberal-democratic conceptions of political leadership, the patron-strongman can bank on the long-neglected fact that clientelism, strongman rule and authoritarian practices of conflict management that include the use of physical violence enjoy high levels of legitimacy in the Philippines, if they are perceived as being utilized as mechanisms in a personalized form of government *for* the people. This in turn is the third pillar underpinning support for Duterte: both his past period in power in Davao City as well as his current term as President are perceived as actually providing the expected and desired policy output and outcome with respect to order, security and development.

This report will show that Duterte is perceived as a highly legitimate personification of the ideal-type "patron-strongman" due to his "street credibility," i.e., his "authentic history of extensive experiences in dangerous or abusive environments or situations," where he gained power "displayed in the form of physical dominance" by his own means (quotations; Bennett 2014: 18, 20). This credibility is underpinned by his proven past and current ability to deliver on what he promises. Duterte is successful because he combines high levels of input legitimacy as a "patron-strongman" with output legitimacy prevalently in the form of the provision of law and order but also in the form of economic government *for* the people.

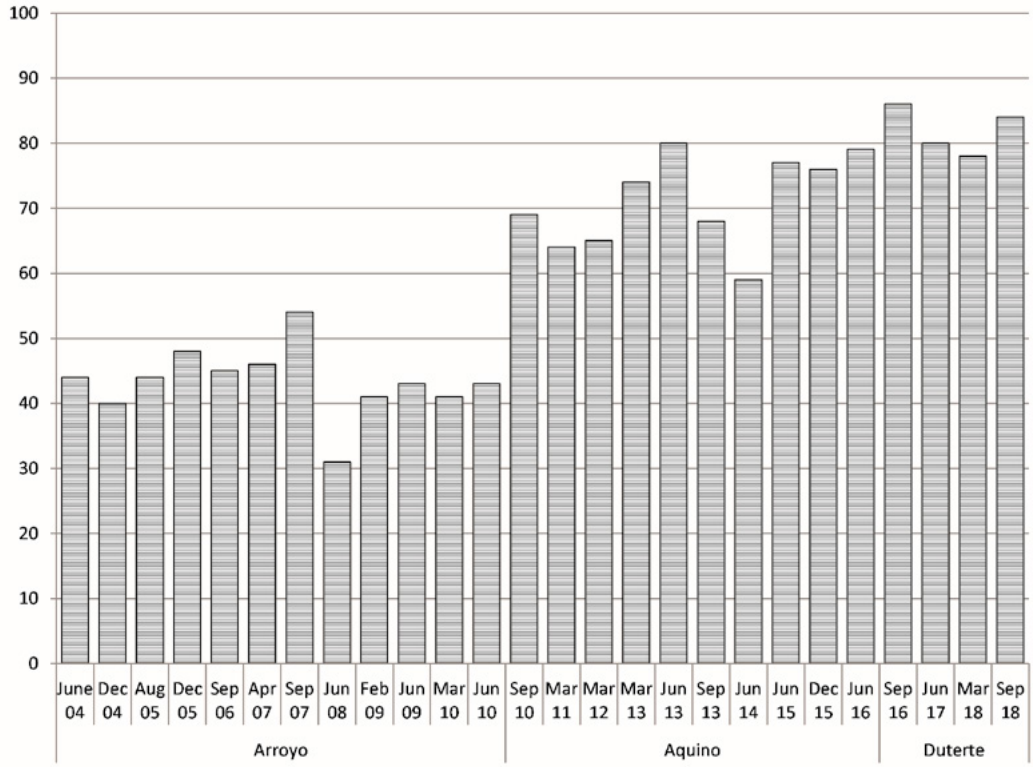
While, outwardly, the Philippines has been a liberal democracy for the past three decades since the People Power Revolution of 1986 that removed Ferdinand Marcos, its political class has continued to consist of bosses and political families or dynasties (Sidel 1999, McCoy 1994). Dominant leadership personalities covered a spectrum extending from patron to strongman, and personal leadership and power always trumped institutional authority. This report argues that this mode of personalized, clientelist leadership balanced by personal control of state and non-state means of violence is not only a top-down phenomenon of oligarchic rule, but also reflects a bottom-up demand by the majority of the population. The culturally legitimate antidote to Duterte is thus not some form of liberal-democratic politician but the caring "good patron," who can also muster a significant amount of "street credibility," more or less shorn of the violent repressive attitudes at the core of Duterte's leadership persona.

The liberal-democratic yardstick, according to which the Duterte administration is deficient on many accounts, while dominant in much of the English-language press as well as the internationally linked Philippine academia and NGO scene,[3] is largely irrelevant beyond the small segment of the

3 The two types of narrative concerning Duterte's war on terror are paradigmatically depicted in two films. On the one hand "On the President's Orders" tells the story of a cruel war on the country's poor, executed by a police force that has not the slightest respect for human rights and rule of law. On the other hand, "Gramo" presents the Philippines as a country threatened by a deadly plague destroying the social fabric of society, causing much misery, crime and the death and victimization of family members, neighbors and others due to the personality changes caused by "shabu"

educated liberal-democratic upper middle class. From the majority perspective, democracy is not endangered in the Philippines. Quite the contrary; Filipinos and Filipinas have never been as satisfied with the way democracy is working in their country as they are under Duterte (see Figure 1 below and in the electronic appendix).[4] If Filipinos and Filipinas actually detested Duterte's illiberal leadership style and felt that their democratic rights were being threatened by war on crime, satisfaction with the way democracy works should have decreased and not, as is actually the case, increased slightly over the level achieved by the Aquino government.

Figure 1: Satisfied with the way democracy works in the Philippines



The following analysis is organized as follows: It first details the forms clientelism takes as well as the role of bosses or strongmen and the uses of physical violence in politics and provides the evidence required for assessing the level of legitimacy of various forms of clientelism and strongman rule. It thus depicts a bandwidth of leadership personae and styles that involve varying levels of violence without losing legitimacy. It then situates Duterte as the long sought for "patron-strongman"

(crystal meth). Duterte is the leader of a heroic fight for the common good (see: Presidential Communications Team 2019; Frontline 2019).

4 The online appendix to this report is available for download as Excel file at: www.hsfk.de/Report0120-Appendix. It details the sources for the various figures and tables displayed in this report and provides further additional data in figures and tables.

with “street credibility” who delivers on his promises. The conclusion discusses possible future developments.

2. PATRONAGE DEMOCRACY AND THE POLITICS OF COERCION: CHARACTERISTICS AND LEGITIMACY

The Philippine polity is often conceived as a patronage democracy characterized by “the three Gs,” i.e., guns, goons and gold.[5] The third G, gold, stands for the core factor of material resources used in patronage to buy and ensure loyalty. However, in the Philippine as in other countries, patronage is merged with coercion, including the use of private and public means of violence (guns and goons) by members of the politico-economic elite at all levels of politics.

This chapter introduces the core building blocks of Philippine socio-political order: these are clientelism and coercion as practices, and patrons, bosses or strongmen and political families or dynasties as agents. In the Philippines, good patrons may order killings and coercive strongmen regularly dole out resources to their client networks and the local population in their bailiwicks. As will be shown below, available evidence suggests that both patronage and coercion enjoy high levels of legitimacy, provided they are exerted by “good” patrons or strongmen and serve the interests of the members of the electorate. This allows elite members to choose from a menu of culturally legitimate leadership characteristics and types and combine these to form specific leadership personae.

2.1 PATRONS AND PATRONAGE: THE POLITICS AND LEGITIMACY OF THE THIRD “G”

2.1.1 THE FORMS ASSUMED BY CLIENTELISM

To a large extent, the standard analytical frame employed for analyzing Philippine politics is patronage or clientelism. The Philippines is perceived as a typical example of a “patronage democracy […] where parties and candidates primarily rely on contingent distribution of material benefits, or patronage, when mobilizing voters” (Berenschot/Aspinall 2020: 1). Such political patronage transforms public into private goods, as benefits are not distributed impersonally but are “perceived to be contingent on the support [the client] gives to the politician” (Berenschot/Aspinall 2020: 4). In the Philippines’s “patronage-based state,” individual patrons and their networks provide the working basis for much of the state’s effective capacity. Thus, “important state functions have long been subcontracted to local power holders throughout the archipelago. Patronage serves as a vital territorial glue. […] While the national government often fails to deliver vital public goods, local Philippine politicians certainly know how to feed patronage resources to their constituents” (Hutchcroft 2012: 115–116).

5 These “three G” have been a widely used short cut for the description of the core dimensions of Philippine politics since Independence. While in the1990s some authors argued that there had been some decline in the political relevance of the three Gs, this has proven to be a short-lived illusion (Linantud 1998; Fernquest 2018).

However, patronage/clientelism comes in different forms varying in intensity, durability, vertical thickness and horizontal extension (Pellicer et al. 2019, 7ff). Three major types can be differentiated: transactional, relational and collective clientelism. Simple vote buying is an example of a purely transactional relationship that is short-term and lacks any affective dimensions. In contrast, relational clientelism is long-term and affectively loaded. There are multiple interactions between patron and client. While votes still play a crucial role as the client's resource, in this type of clientelism an enduring and more broad-based loyalty relationship between the two sides is generally found. Unlike transactional clientelism, the "transactions" may involve significant time lags between the reciprocal exchange of goods. Collective clientelism can be understood as an outgrowth of relational clientelism. While it is typically long-term and involves strong affective components, it goes beyond traditional forms of dyadic exchange relationships as it provides certain types of "public goods" to specific groups or communities in exchange for the votes of the group's members (or at least of the vast majority of them). Thus, public goods are semi-privatized and transformed into "club goods"[6] that are for example generated through "pork-barrel"[7] funds and delivered to selected local communities on the basis of the expected political payoffs. Collective clientelism overlaps with pork-barrel politics. The Philippine political system provides an ideal breeding ground for such collective clientelism/pork-barrel politics due to the combination of a highly personalized political culture, where family names always outdo party affiliation or political orientation, with an electoral system that subdivides the nation into single-member electoral districts. Put simply, pork passes from the top down through the system to the smallest administrative unit in the Philippines, known as *barangay*, while loyalty flows upward. For an individual politician to go against the systemic logic is almost impossible, as the single plurality "representative cannot 'escape from the parochialism of his district … he is limited […] by the boys back home'" (Lancaster 1986: 70; see also: Stratman/Baur 2002, Gagliarducci et al. 2007).

In the Philippines, as in all other clientelist socio-political orders, patronage is a multi-level phenomenon with patrons at lower levels in the position of clients in relation to higher-level patrons. Intermediate-level patron-clients also have crucial positions as brokers. While patrons distribute resources to their clients in their own right, they also use their control of their clients' vote to channel resources controlled by higher-level patrons to their constituencies. Unlike party-based clientelist systems (as in much of Latin America), in the almost purely familistic Philippines each patron only controls his immediate clients. If a lower-level patron/client switches loyalty to another upper-level patron, he generally takes with him his patronal network and the associated votes.

At the highest political level, clientelist relationships are almost purely transactional. Members of Congress, governors and mayors of independent cities form links to the national administration of

6 Club goods provide "benefits directed at groups of individuals, which can be withheld from other groups but not withheld from individuals within the group" (Hicken 2011: 291).

7 In the Philippines "pork barrel" primarily refers to central government funds that are doled out to district representatives and senators for local projects. Although financed by the national taxpayers, they benefit the constituency of a specific politician. Other types of pork can be developed from the Internal Revenue Allotments that make up a large percentage of the local government units' (LGU) budgets. The ingenuity with which various financial resources are transformed into "pork" and thus made available for individual discretion is documented in great detail in the multitude of audits by the Commission on Audit (audit reports are available online: https://www.coa.gov.ph/).

the day on a short-term utility-oriented basis and switch party membership almost at will. Political parties are generally political machines devoid of more than superficial programs that wax and wane according to the idiosyncratic calculations of a large number of individual politicians continuously adapting to a changing environment in order to get the best return for their vote in Congress and their control over local votes. This logic is illustrated by the 2016 and 2019 elections. In 2016 the Liberal Party (LP) was by far the strongest party, winning 115 seats in the House of Representatives, yet its candidate Mar Roxas lost to Rodrigo Duterte, whose party, the PDP-Laban, only won three of the 238 district seats. Only a few months later, the vast majority of LP representatives had switched to Duterte's PDP-Laban or to other parties that were part of the presidential majority coalition. In the run-up to the 2019 elections there were 21 LP representatives left against 95 PDP-Laban representatives in the House of Representatives. President Aquino explained the rationale of the party hopping done by LP representatives' during his final days in office: "Remember, a lawmaker must represent the interest of his or her district. So perhaps, in their view, they would be able to fulfill their promises to their district if they would join another group" (quoted in Rappler 2016). These dynamics create a highly fragmented and perpetually shifting environment in which the various politicians and their families represent the only stable units.

Clientelism and patronage are also crucial determinants of local government-police relationships, as local government units (LGUs) provide a significant amount of the local police's operating finance and hardware. In general, it is the LGU that provides crucial resources from gasoline to computers, guns and ammunition.

In addition to the everyday contributions, there are regular large scale contributions that illustrate the overall dependency of the PNP on its LGU counterparts. In 2018, for example, Cavite provincial and local government units provided the local police with 35 patrol vehicles, several motorcycles and a number of rifles, while in Isabela province the governor donated 32 motorcycles to the provincial police with the promise of an additional 24 (Philippine News Agency 2018; Philippine Information Agency 2018). Other local government units contribute large amounts for the building of new police stations, or even finance the new buildings. Needless to say, such practice makes local police indebted to local government officials.

At the lower levels of politics, clientelist relationships tend to be more relational and also increasingly collective. This results from the fact that local representatives as well as local politicians tend to be reelected until term-limit rules apply.[8] One example for family control is the Piñeda family in Pampanga. Their rise to provincial political power dates from 1992, when the matriarch Lilia Piñeda was elected mayor of her hometown Lubao in Pampanga province, a position she held for three consecutive terms. She was succeeded by her son Dennis (until 2010) and then her daughters Mylin (until 2019) and Esmeralda (since 2019). Lilia Piñeda served as a member of the provincial board (2001–2007) until she became provincial governor (2010–2019), with her son taking the vice-gubernatorial position from 2013 to 2019, when the two switched positions with Dennis as governor and

8 Mayors, provincial governors and congress representatives can be reelected two times. Then they must pause at least for one term. Fairly often members of the incumbent's family take over then.

Lilia as vice-governor. In 2019 Dennis' sister, outgoing Lubao mayor Mylin was elected provincial board member. Yolanda Piñeda, the wife of the present governor, held the position of mayor of St. Rita municipality for three consecutive terms from 2007 to 2016. In 2016 a trusted henchman, former barangay captain Ferdinand Salalila took over the mayoral position on the ticket of Kambilan, a local party established by Lilia Piñeda in 2010 as a vehicle for her election to governor. Small wonder that under such circumstances subordinate elected officials (town mayors or barangay captains) try to establish lasting relationships in order to siphon resources to their bailiwicks.

Such longevity is hard to explain with a transactional logic, even if the incumbent's advantage is factored in. Much more plausible is the explanation found in the vast ethnographic literature that emphasizes the normative and affective foundations of such relational clientelist relationships.

The core question is: what hinders the local electorate from shifting their votes to an opposition candidate promising better returns than the incumbent. Much of the literature focused on transactional clientelism argues that patrons must be able to control their clients' compliance and, if necessary, sanction defection. Yet, given the secrecy of the ballot this is a rather complicated matter, so that in practice control is hardly feasible at the individual level. While control is possible at the collective level of the precinct and barangay, any sanctions for (collective) defection would punish defectors and loyal followers alike.

The ethnographic literature argues that client support rests on norms of reciprocity and corresponding feelings of obligation. Further, it argues that loyalty is not so much dependent on the assessment of immediate or future gains, but on past benefactions and services rendered by the patron to the individuals and the local community. Lawson and Greene (2014) show that monetary payments generate a lower level of obligation than non-monetary "gifts" (for example paying for the doctor's visit for a sick child) and, most importantly, that "obligation stemming from past receipts of benefits weighed more heavily on voters than their current partisan sympathies" (Lawson/Greene 2014: 67). Further, in a large-scale survey of vote-buying preferences of Malawians, Kao, Lust and Rakner (2017) demonstrated that many of the assumptions underlying political science and economic research on vote-buying demand by the poorer segments of the population do not fit empirically observable patterns: for example, their alleged preference for "tangible handouts in the present over redistributive benefits in the future," or their lack of understanding of the "collective downside of vote buying" (quotes: Kao et al. 2017: 5). Instead, Malawian voters "are driven by community interests, not short-term, targeted incentives. Malawians respond most favorably to a promise of community goods, followed by a promise of future, personal assistance. They respond less favorably to those who promise immediate exchanges of tangible goods for votes" (Kao et al. 2017: 3). Poor voters overwhelmingly perceived politicians who offered immediate personal benefits as untrustworthy. While they were willing to accept the incentives, they did not feel obliged to vote for these candidates.

Put simply, clientelism works best and has the highest legitimacy, when it is relational and collective, with handouts embedded in long-term relationships that focus on improvements for the local community. Further, as Garrido demonstrated for the Philippines, in a setting dominated by clientelism, the client's loyalty does not necessarily lie with the prospective patron who offers the most

tangible material resources. Immaterial resources play a similar if not larger role. It is the specific leadership persona that is of crucial importance. As Garrido shows in a detailed ethnographic analysis of Metro Manila urban poor support for presidential candidate Joseph Estrada (2017) certain characteristics are crucial, but can neither be bought nor simulated. While Garrido situates his analysis within the "populism" paradigm, his observations are crucial for understanding the "irrational" bonding logic and emotional quality of patronage. Put simply and translated into the language of clientelism, Garrido argues that those at the lower level of the asymmetric clientelist bond expect to be treated "with consideration and respect," and this behavior of the superior party must be enduring as "part of a coherent performance" (Garrido 2017: 657). Arguelles corroborates this view in his research by pointing out the core requirement of "authenticity" (Arguelles 2019: 428). Once durably established such an "authentic," leadership persona is resistant to external threats as new information is "interpreted according to established understandings, and contradictory information may be discarded or discounted" (Garrido 2017: 659). If prospective patrons are perceived as lacking in sincerity and authenticity and only simulating the caring disposition toward clients, loyalty will not follow. Understood in this way, transactional clientelism is the "thin" version of an otherwise "thick" phenomenon. As an ideal type, the patron promises government *for* his "people." He expects "unconditional loyalty from his followers in return for a pledge of abiding support for all their needs" (David 2015). The affectionate dimension of patronage is "couched in the symbolism of personal care" (Rutten 2011: 596). The deep affective attachment associated with relational clientelism explains why the rejection of one patron does not entail the "renunciation of the patronal system," but the embracing of another, hopefully good patron (quotes: Linger 2005: 85).

In sum, this short discussion of patronage suggests that liberal democratic leadership personae[9] are in scarce supply in the Philippines, where clientelism in its various forms dominates in politics. It also suggests that this dominance need not be an outgrowth of a top-down repressive mode of governance that renders liberal democratic efforts to replace the patron with the responsible, law-abiding politician futile. Understanding clientelism as a "thick," normatively and affectively highly loaded phenomenon suggests that patronage and the patron as a leadership persona may enjoy high levels of legitimacy and thus also have a strong demand side, a line of argument that will be further developed below.

9 There is no single model of liberal democratic leadership, as there is no single model of liberal democracy. Actually, liberal theorists "have shown almost no interest in the role, meaning, value or ethics of political leadership" (Horton 2007: 1). However, a set of dimensions can be established from the scarce literature that may be said to constitute the necessary, even though not sufficient requirements for good liberal democratic leadership: 1) leaders have to follow laws and regulations; this includes respect for individual and minority freedoms as well as human rights; 2) leaders' decision making must follow due process, so that leaders can be held accountable. Finally, good liberal democratic leaders must submit themselves "to the authority of political institutions and constitutional procedures" (Allen 2011: 27) and thus to the fundamental principle of separation of powers and show a "commitment […] to regime maintenance or to upholding the legitimate procedures of liberal democracy" (Allen 2011: 31).

2.1.2 LEGITIMACY OF CLIENTELIST EXCHANGE

The above discussion already suggests that patronage also seems to have its demand side (Auyero 1999) and with it, probably high levels of local legitimacy. While English-language national media targeting the upper and the educated middle class may present a critical image of patrons and patronage, the local media are full of praise and support for this specific form of government *for* the people.

This reflects a difference in perceptions of what constitutes "good government" or "good politics" that separates the educated middle class from the vast majority of the poor and lower classes. Sociologist and anthropologists like Schaffer, Pinches (2010), or Kusaka as well as political scientists like Thompson argue that there are two competing discourses of democracy, broadly separated by social class. To the educated middle class the poor, i.e., the majority of the population, are largely responsible for the ailments of Philippine democracy, as they keep on reelecting politicians who symbolize patronage and clientelist access to resources: "[i]t is because the poor hold undue influence, many of the better-off believe, that politics is stinking and rotten" (Schaffer 2005: 11). Thus "most reformers […] have banked on a […] [specific] way to put the poor in their place: corrective intervention. That is, they have tried to discipline the poor, to train them to vote correctly" (Schaffer 2005, 14). In the Philippines this asymmetry and moral divide is accentuated by language. Mastery of the English language and modern concepts of socio-political analysis translate into a moral asymmetry, where language is used by "people of high social status […] to display their superiority and authority over their subordinates" (Kusaka 2017a: 36).

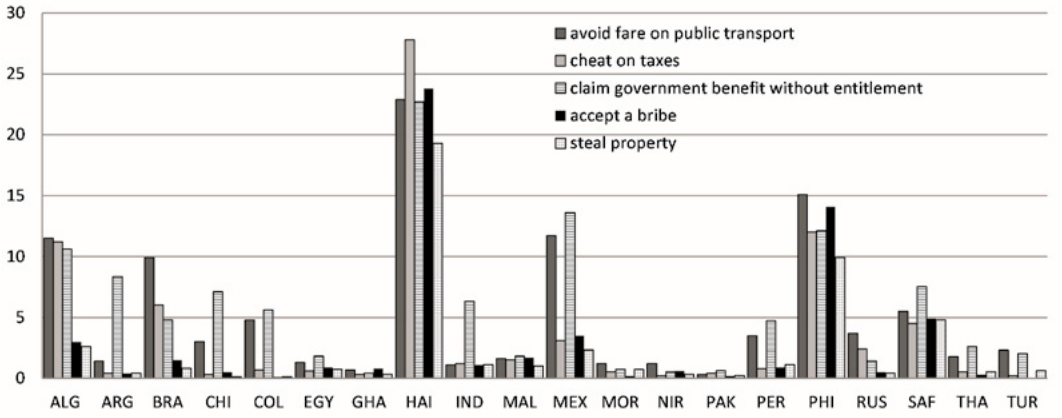
Thus it may even be argued that middle-class reformism is out of line with the self-expressed needs of the poor, or even the less affluent majority of the people. While the poor are highly critical of "bad" patrons, they do not reject patronage as such. Quite the contrary, the humane patron is at the core of their conception of moral politics. As Schaffer argues, gift giving is part and parcel of a larger affectively infused relationship that provides the backdrop of positively evaluated relational but not transactional clientelism (Schaffer 2005; see also Schaffer 2002).

The results of such ethnographic analysis of the rather positive assessment of the "good patron" and relational patronage by the poorer segment/majority of the population are supported by a recent study on local grassroots leaders. The authors surveyed 273 barangay officials' (village leaders) perceptions of local patterns of patronage and "dynastic politics" (i.e., the local political dominance of one family). A full 64% of respondents held a positive and a further 35% a neutral view on political patronage, with only 0.7% holding a negative view. The majority of barangay officials also viewed political dynasties positively, albeit qualified by normative requirements of good government for the people; i.e., "delivery" of projects to the local constituencies (Saquibal/Saquibal 2016: 59).

Given that patronage requires personal control of resources by the patron, who then funnels them to his or her clients, often contrary to legal requirements, prospective client support for patronage makes a positive view of social practices that ignore the legal-illegal divide necessary. In this respect

the World Values Survey[10] provides some important insights. Several items in the survey involve the issue of whether respondents would feel justified in ignoring certain laws that all link in one way or another to the question of gaining personally at the cost of others. Compared with respondents from 57 other countries, Filipino respondents tend to have a very positive attitude to illegal activities that allow individual gain at the cost of the wider community. On a ten-point Likert scale, on average 12.6% of Filipinos and Filipinas felt *always justified* (maximum value) in avoiding paying their fare on public transport, cheating on taxes, claiming government benefits to which they are not entitled, accepting bribes or stealing property, compared with an overall average of 2.1%. This was topped only by Haiti (see Figure 2a below for a smaller sample of 20 countries and Figure 2b in the electronic appendix for the complete sample).[11]

Figure 2a: It is always justifiable to ...



Philippine sociologist Randolf David sums up the results neatly by deploring that: "The true addressees of any program of political reform are the voters, the ones who ultimately decide what kind of leaders the nation needs. Alas, many of them can't see what's wrong with patronage" (David 2014).

10 The World Values Survey is the most longstanding and comprehensive global opinion survey with currently six completed waves from the early 1980s to 2014. It provides data on socio-cultural and political change. Wave six contained surveys in 60 countries (see: http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp). For the comparison Germany and Quatar were excluded, as one of the five dimensions was not surveyed.

11 A full 26.8% of Filipino respondents opted for the upper half of the 10 point Likert scale (i.e. 6–10; see electronic appendix), that is they clearly distanced themselves from the idea that these various forms of corruption-affine behaviors are never or only rarely justified. Here Haitian and South African respondents are the only ones who exhibit a less law-abiding attitude.

2.2 COERCION AND PUNISHMENT: BRINGING IN THE OTHER TWO "GS"

The analysis of the role of coercion in a clientelist environment brings the other two Gs (guns and goons) into the equation. Whether clientelist or not, no socio-political system exists without coercion and punishment. As can be expected, the clientelist logic of relationships also permeates the spheres of coercion and punishment; i.e., individuals have wide latitude with respect to when and how to employ what type of coercion and punishment. To such individuals the legal-illegal divide is relevant primarily from a cost-benefit calculation.

In the Philippines, where patronage emanates from individuals and political families or dynasties, it is these political and economic actors who also control the public and private means of coercion, including the means of armed and potentially fatal extralegal coercion and punishment. The accompaniment of the patrons are the bosses or strongmen, described by Sidel (1999: 19) as "predatory power brokers who achieve monopolistic control over both coercive and economic resources within given territorial jurisdictions or bailiwicks. […] 'Bossism,' […] refers to the interlocking, multitiered directorate of bosses who use their control over the state apparatus to exploit the archipelago's human and natural resources."

2.2.1 FORMS OF EXTRALEGAL FATAL COERCION AND PUNISHMENT

The formally *legal* form of police use of deadly force in armed encounters with crime suspects cannot be seen in isolation from other forms of *extralegal* deadly violence in the Philippines. Put simply, modern Philippine politics has always included the option of eliminating others if this was deemed essential by contenders for political and economic power. Victims of violent coercion and punishment include political activists, human rights defenders and land reform activists, lawyers, prosecutors and judges, as well as journalists, not to forget members of the political elite itself, i.e., political office holders and candidates. While targeted killing may be said to be the choice of last resort, it is definitely one option for conflict "resolution" and punishment resorted to by Philippine political and economic elites.

The Philippines, for example, tops the global count of killed environmental defenders with 30 killings in 2018 (Global Witness 2019: 8). Other data assembled by the Philippine NGO Karapatan suggest that during the past decades thousands of political and social activists have been killed. During the Macapagal-Arroyo presidency (2001–2010) 128 political activists were killed per year, this number went down to 56 killings per year during the Aquino presidency (2010–2016), and rose again to 89 killings annually during the first three years of the Duterte presidency (2016–2019).[12] In addition, deadly violence targets journalists, with 118 killed between 2004 and 2018. If the 38 journalists killed in the notorious and highly atypical Ampatuan massacre in 2009 is excluded, this yields an av-

12 Calculated on the basis of various quarterly and annual Karapatan reports (https://www.karapatan.org/).

erage of 5.3 journalists killed per year (Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility no year).[13] In the same period of 15 years, at least 95 lawyers, judges and prosecutors were killed (6.3 per year). One prominent further form of deadly violence targets political rivals and their supporters. For the 2007 elections, the PNP reported 114 deaths, of which 59 were candidates (Bantay Eleksyon 2007; Pabico 2007). For the 2010 elections 104 election-related killings were reported, for the 2013 elections 46, for the 2016 elections 50, and for the 2019 elections 23.[14] Between elections, documentation is meager. However, Rappler documents 3, 4, and 5 mayors and 2, 1 and 4 vice-mayors killed in 2016, 2017 and 2018, respectively (Gavilan 2019). Other PNP reports mention a total of 38 politically-motivated killings for 2018 (Macapagal 2019).

This violence is typically the handiwork of hired killers, goons as well as private armed groups (PAGs) or "private armies." In 2010 the Presidential "Independent Commission Against Private Armies" reported that "political dynasties," i.e., local political bosses and families, mostly in rural areas, "form and maintain private armies, because these groups serve as the family's coercive force to keep them firmly entrenched in their respective bailiwicks" (Independent Commission Against Private Armies 2010: 3). This commission also noted the de facto privatization of military and police auxiliaries as well as the abuse of various powers provincial governors and municipal mayors have over the police at their respective levels.[15]

Such privatization of deadly violence is not only a result of the clientelist dependency relationship outlined above, but also an effect of the considerable disciplinary and operational control LGU executives have over "their" local police. They can, for example, choose the chief as well as the members of their local police from shortlists and recommend their transfer or reassignment. Together with the clientelist dependency discussed above, this translates into a police force that lacks insulation against local political interference and may easily be turned into an armed state institution enforcing the political or economic interests of the local government chief executive or turning a blind eye to illegal transgressions by the local politico-economic elite. In case of "unruly" local police directors, higher level politicians function as "lifelines" that can be turned to by local politicians "whenever they

13 To put this into comparison, one may rely on the somewhat lower data of the Committee to Protect Journalists that reports on the killing of Journalists worldwide from 1992 to 2020 (https://cpj.org/).

Table 1a: Journalists killed between 1992 and 2020 (motive confirmed)

Philippines	**125**	Mexico	56	Indonesia	10
Brazil	42	Nigeria	11	India	53
El Salvador	3	Kenya	2	Pakistan	68

The comparison with a small set of other countries already shows the outstanding level of use of deadly force against journalists in the Philippines during the past decades of liberal democracy.

14 Data are not directly comparable as in recent elections only "verified" killings were included, even though the criteria remain obscure, as most of the "verified" cases remain unsolved.

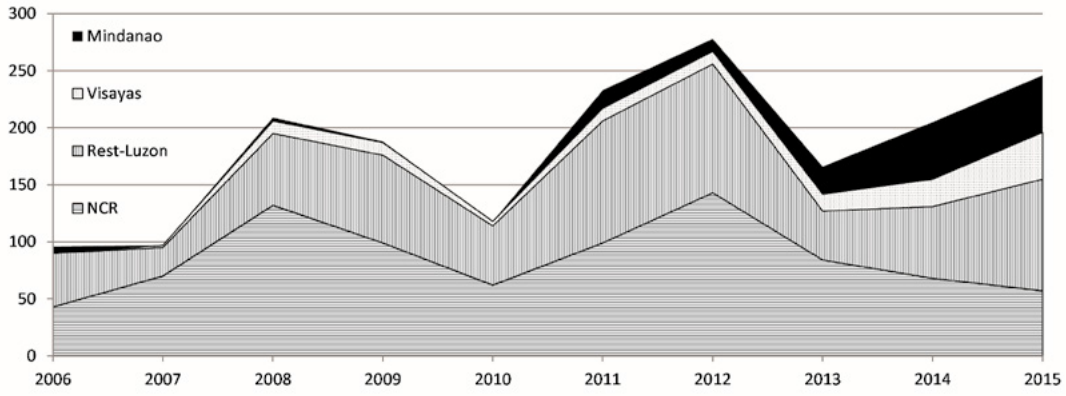
15 For an in-depth study that provides a quantitative assessment of the regional and provincial shares of various forms of extrajudicial killings for the decade from 2001 to 2010, see Parreño 2011.

want the police off their backs. And politicians turn to these 'lifelines' for other activities as well" (Paredes 2011: 173).

The final form to be discussed here is deadly use of force against crime suspects, which in the past has been typically in the form of death squad vigilantism, most prominent in Davao City under Rodrigo Duterte but also in Tagum and Cebu City under various mayors. Less well known is that already in pre-Duterte police in some, although far from all local government units resorted to fatal use of force in armed encounters in either highly excessive numbers and/or in combination with a complete absence of any victims on the police's side, signaling that the vast majority of "armed encounters" have involved one-sided use of deadly force.

I have constructed a dataset encompassing incidents of on-duty police use of deadly force for the decade from 2006 to 2015.[16] An analysis of the national data, subdivided into four macro-regions, reveals a curvilinear pattern for the pre-Duterte decade from 2006 to 2015 that is superimposed on an overall rise of approximately 150% in the 10 years before Duterte (from 96 cases in 2006 to 246 cases in 2015). Regionally Luzon, which had initially been responsible for more than 90% of the killings, lost in importance to the Visayas and Mindanao, especially since 2013. On Luzon, administrative regions lying outside the National Capital Region (NCR)[17] slowly superseded the NCR with respect to police use of deadly force (Figure 3 below and in the online appendix).

Figure 3: Suspects killed by the police in armed encounters by macro-region 2006-2015

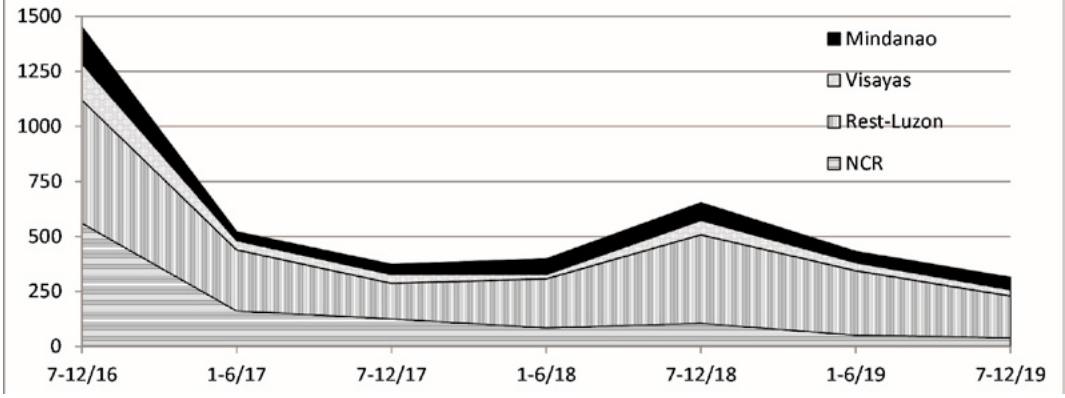


16 This dataset relies, as does the dataset on Duterte-period violence compiled by ABS-CBN, on online media analysis of national and local media and police reports. For further details, see the online appendix and Kreuzer 2016, 2018, 2019. The ABS-CBN data can be accessed at: https://news.abs-cbn.com/specials/map-charts-the-death-toll-of-the-war-on-drugs.

17 This is the Cordillera Administrative Region and regions 1, 2, 3, 4a, 4b and 5 (total of ~39 million inhabitants). According to the 2015 census Luzon has approximately 51% of the Philippine population (~51 million), of which approximately 13 million live in the NCR. The Visayas has close to 20 million and Mindanao 24 million inhabitants. These regions will be labeled as "Rest-Luzon" in this report.

With Duterte's accession to office the previous lesser role of the NCR was reversed during the initial period to the end of 2016. The following periods saw a quick reversion to the earlier distribution, although with a heightened role of the rest of Luzon (see Figure 4a below and Figure 4b in the electronic appendix).

Figure 4a: Suspects killed by the police in armed encounters by macro-region 7/2016-12/2019



Overall, late 2019 levels of deadly police violence still surpassed pre-Duterte levels by more than 200%. However, they dropped to the pre-Duterte "normal" in much of the NCR, most prominently in Manila and Quezon City. During the second half of 2019 eight persons were reportedly killed in Manila and 15 in Quezon City, which, if extrapolated to one year would mean a lower level of deadly police violence compared with the pre-Duterte decade. Even if the data is adjusted for the dark field between the ABS-CBN data and the "real numbers" reported by the Philippine National Police (Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency 2019) nationally, the two cities would be back to their "normal" pre-Duterte level. This largely holds true for the whole NCR. ABS-CBN recorded 40 killings for the second half of 2019, and my dataset documents an average of 85.5 killings annually for the six year period from 2010 to 2015. Put simply, this suggests that the "Duterte frame" with its focus on a centrally orchestrated campaign may be inadequate for explaining current levels of police use of deadly force, a shift that has not been taken up in either the media or the scientific literature.

Spatial distribution of these various forms of elite/state use of deadly force is neither random, nor uniform, but seems to vary according to types of victims and perceived threat to the interests of the local ruling elite (see Table 1b in the online appendix). Killings of activists documented by Karapatan are most common in regions that tend to have very low levels of deadly police violence. During the first three years of the Duterte period, for example, Karapatan documented not a single case for the NCR and only 10 and 8 cases for Region 3 and the combined regions 4a and 4b to the north and south of the NCR, respectively. By far the highest rates of killings were in Mindanao (mostly regions 11 to 13 and the ARMM), in Region 5 (Luzon) and in the Western and Central Visayas (regions 6 and 7). Again, another pattern emerges in the analysis of killings of journalists (documented by Center

for Media Freedom and Responsibility n.d.). Here neither the NCR nor the Visayas experienced any fatal violence. The 15 cases were almost evenly spread among rest of Luzon (7, of which 4 were in the Bicol Region, i.e., Region 5) and Mindanao.

In sum, in the Philippines extralegal violence is used by the dominant class and its state agents as a last resort in multiple contexts, horizontally against political and economic contenders and vertically in a top-down fashion against various forms of "deviant" behavior threatening the interests or position of the elite. High levels of spatial variation and differing patterns of distribution with respect to the various types of violence demonstrate that this type of violence follows a local logic linked to the "needs" of local political (and economic) elites.

2.2.2 LEGITIMACY OF PRIVATIZED FATAL COERCION

Rather surprisingly there is significant evidence for assuming that at least some of the private and extralegal violence inherent in strongman rule may enjoy high levels of public support or legitimacy.

The first piece of evidence is the Filipinos' and Filipinas' enduring predilection for voting for actual or perceived strongmen with known records of use of extralegal force, as, for example, for Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan, the leader of several coups against the government of Corazon Aquino. He was elected as one of only 24 senators of the Philippines from 1995 to 2004 and again from 2007 to 2019. His emulator in coup leadership, Antonio Trillanes, who led his first mutiny in 2003, was elected senator in 2007, while still serving his jail sentence. Coming from a court hearing he and other officers staged the next coup in the same year. He was granted amnesty in 2010 and reelected senator in 2013. Juan Ponce Enrile, defense minister and confidant of then dictator Ferdinand Marcos (1972–1986) as well as defense minister during the first months of the Aquino government, was forced to step down after it became known that he was one of the main instigators of an early coup attempt against Aquino. Only a few months later he was elected senator, a position he held until 2016, only interrupted by two short breaks due to term-limit rules. He ran again in 2019 at the age of 95, but lost for the first time. Another case is Panfilo Lacson, a former chief of the National Police (1999–2001), who was elected senator in 2001 (two terms to 2013, and again from 2016 to the present). Lacson has a tough anti-crime stance. He was linked to a police shootout that left 11 members of a crime syndicate, the *Kuratong Baleleng*, dead with no survivors, while there were no killed or wounded on the police side. He later commanded the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force, when Salvador Dacer, a critical publicist and his driver were abducted and killed by members of this task force in 2000. As senator he eluded criminal prosecution in 2010 by escaping abroad until the case against him was effectively closed in 2011. When he could not stand again for senator in 2013 he was appointed presidential assistant by President Aquino, returning to his senatorial position in 2016. A final case to mention is Alfredo Lim, ex police general and four-time mayor of Manila City (1992–1998, 2007–2013). Shortly after his first election, Newsweek (1994) asked "Is he dirtier than Harry?" on account of Lim's ruthless cleansing of Ermita of bars and prostitution as well as of homeless squatters. Most notorious was his vow to rid Manila of its drug pushers within six months, a promise that resulted in a large number of vigilante killings of drug suspects, which, however, hardly made any headlines. Not

only this promise and the killings but also his slogan "Magaling na Lider, Disciplinado" (good leader, disciplined) is reminiscent of Duterte. Despite his hard-line policy he was reelected in 1995 and again in 2007 and 2010 on exactly this ticket of a Philippine "Dirty Harry."

Also successful were actors who assumed the guise of strongmen, bandits or marginal characters in the media, such as former mayor of San Juan City, senator, Vice-President and President of the Philippines Joseph "Erap" Estrada and Manuel "Lito" Lapid, a former stuntman and actor, who was elected Vice-Governor and Governor of Pampanga province (1992–2004) and Senator of the Philippines (2004–2016; since 2019). A genuine representation of fighting strength was another successful candidate: Emmanuel "Pac-Man" Pacquiao, one of the world's greatest boxing champions. Still active as a boxer, Pacquiao was elected Congress representative for Sarangani (2010–2016) and Senator of the Philippines (since 2016). Finally, the clear-cut victory of Rodrigo "Digong" Duterte, who may be said to have done everything to repel the faint-hearted as vice-mayor and mayor of Davao City (almost continuously from 1987 to 2016) and during his presidential campaign, shows that Filipinos and Filipinas actually value strong leadership that does not hesitate to punish wrongdoers or utilize violence in order to accomplish its goals.

A comparative analysis of various surveys on political attitudes of Filipinos and Filipinas that permits comparison with other countries supports the existence of a predilection for strongman rule.

Given that the Philippines experienced the Marcos dictatorship (1972–1986), it is rather surprising that the majority of Filipino respondents supported having a strong leader (very or fairly good: 59.1%) or having the army rule (very or fairly good: 51.4%) in the 6th wave of the World Values survey (2010–2014; see: http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org). More than 30% of respondents also strongly perceived obedience to the rulers to be an essential characteristic of democracy (maximum 10 of 10-point Likert scale); 79% of Filipino respondents endorsed greater respect for authority. Among the total set of 55 countries where respondents were asked to position themselves on the left-right political scale, Filipino respondents were the top scorer positioning them at the most right-wing level of 10 (on a 10-point Likert scale), with 30.9% choosing this option (runner-up: Mexico, 18.6%; average excluding the Philippines: 6.4%).[18] In all these respects Filipino respondents show a clearly more authoritarian orientation than the average of other states. At the same time outright support for democracy (having a democratic political system is very good) is significantly lower compared with the average of the other countries (see Table 2 in the online appendix).

This critical distancing from democratic governance is supported by corresponding data from the Asian Barometer survey (see Figure 5 in the online appendix). A comparison of the Philippines with its neighbors shows that Filipinos' and Filipinas' support for democracy as either a problem-solving device or an intrinsic good is lower than all of their neighbors', while on the other hand they are more willing to give alternatives to democracy a chance than most of their neighbors (Chu et al. 2017).

18 Extending the breadth from the extreme right to "right" (values 8–10) does not change the picture significantly. In the Philippines, 42.8% of respondents fall into this category. There is only one country with a higher number (Pakistan: 55.4%). Mexico stands at 34.4%, followed by Turkey (31.6%).

Given the traditionally highly critical stance on the Philippine National Police (PNP) exhibited by liberal Philippine intellectuals, it is rather surprising that public confidence in the police was actually very high in the years before Duterte. In the 4th and 6th waves of the WVS 61% and 67%, respectively, reported having a great deal or quite a lot of confidence. To put this into perspective: 67% is the third highest value of the total of 20 countries analyzed for the 6th wave (overall average of the other 19: 43.8%; highest Malaysia/Turkey: 74%). This positive evaluation of the national police is supported by Social Weather Stations surveys of pre-Duterte Philippines (2010, 2014 and early 2016), which showed similar and rising rates of "much trust" in the PNP of 65, 66 and 69%, respectively (Social Weather Stations 2017).

Surprisingly, the anti-crime campaign of the PNP, the vast number of police killings and the media storm against PNP human rights violations seem to have had no effect on the public's evaluation at all. The Philippine Trust Index (PTI), for example, reports high levels of trust in the PNP in 2017 (overall trust rate 69%, 29% trust the PNP "very much"). This rose to 74% in 2019 (40% moderate and 34% extreme trust; see EON 2017: 9; EON 2019: 5). In a late 2019 survey of Pulse Asia, the PNP was rated the third most trusted institution with a trust rating of 72% and an even higher approval rating of 77% for its activities, which was in line with earlier quarterly approval ratings that ranged from 70% to 83% (Aguilar 2019; Cruz 2019). Explicit disapproval was decidedly low, with only 3% to 7% from late 2018 to late 2019.

This general picture also fits the results of a detailed study undertaken by the National Police Commission (Napolcom) in the NCR in late 2017. Rather surprisingly Caloocan police topped the list with an 89% trust rating, even though it had been at the center of a media storm after the extrajudicial killing of a 17-year-old student by the Caloocan PNP that resulted in the sacking and redeployment of the entire police force and jail sentences for two of its members. Despite its even higher numbers of killings, Quezon City police came in second (73.6% trust; Tabalong 2018). A further counterintuitive result of a 2018 survey shows that 59% of respondents think that the police has "true respect for the human rights of Filipinos," whereas only 20% have a negative view, with 21% undecided (Social Weather Stations 2018). Thus, all available data suggest that overall trust in the police remains high, regardless of the number of people killed by the police. It might even be tentatively suggested that the tough crime-control policy that made extensive use of killing suspects actually enhanced public trust in and support for the police. While three quarters of Filipinos and Filipinas are worried that killings might target members of their own family, even more support the campaign and confirm that anti-illegal drug operations in their neighborhoods were conducted in an orderly manner (Pulse Asia 2017).

If it is assumed that police killings of suspects are perceived as acts of punishment, then Filipino attitudes to physical punishment and the use of violence in the "solution" of problems become important further clues for assessing the perceived legitimacy of violent police action. Here, available research is fairly scarce, but research on corporal punishment in child rearing suggests "a high overall prevalence of violence against Filipino children" (Council for the Welfare of Children/UNICEF 2016: 17). Even more important is that such corporal punishment is widely accepted as a social norm: "parents believe that corporal punishment is a parental duty necessary to 'bend the young in the right

direction' […]. As such, discipline is viewed by both parents and children as a manifestation of parents' love and concern" (University of the Philippines et al. 2016: 38).

This impression is also mirrored in the World Value Surveys questionnaire on attitudes toward physical violence. Compared with the other countries already mentioned above, the Philippines clearly stands out, as Filipino respondents seem to be extraordinarily willing to accept physical violence as a way of dealing with problems or conflicts (Figures 6a+6b in the online appendix). In the Philippines 11 to 12% of respondents feel that violence against others or against their own wife and children can *always* be justified, the most extreme value on a 10-item Likert scale. The average values for the 59 other cases included in the comparison were between 0.99 for generalized violence and 2.78 for parental violence against children. The Philippines is only partly exceeded by Haiti in two categories, and far exceeds all other countries with respect to respondents' willingness to give carte blanche ("always justifiable") approval to physical violence against children, women and others in general. This picture shifts only slightly if support for violence is extended to the upper half of the Likert scale (6–10).

With respect to the current wave of killings of drug crime-related suspects, it is especially important to note that in the 6th Wave of the World Value Survey, Filipino respondents stood out for their aversion to drug addicts. While they are in general highly tolerant with respect to categories of people they would *not* like to have as neighbors, from heavy drinkers to people of a different religion, people of a different race, or homosexuals, this does *not* hold true for two categories, where Filipino respondents' rejection tops the list of the 20 countries: these are drug addicts (Philippines 95.5% rejection; average of 19 other countries: 75.8% rejection) and people who have AIDS (Philippines 74.8% rejection, in line with Turkey 74.9%; average of 19 other countries: 34.1%).

While far from palatable, this data strongly suggest that violence is not widely rejected, but should be tentatively understood as a fairly acceptable means of resolving conflict, achieving goals or punishing a wrongdoer. This seems to go together with a rather conservative and authoritarian outlook and a surprisingly high level of trust in the PNP, despite the latter's excessive use of deadly force against crime suspects. Put simply, the majority of Filipinos and Filipinas seem to value a strongman attitude with its accompanying traits of assertiveness and willingness to ignore or actively break the rules of the democratic game and the rule of law, as long as the strongman is successful in delivering security and order.

3. SUPPORT FOR THE PATRON-STRONGMAN WHO DELIVERS

Thus, overall, a plausible background exists that encompasses tolerance or active support of an iron-fisted policy against crime that does not hesitate to utilize exceptional strategies for promoting the goal of a largely drug-free society. The enduring overall support for both Duterte's presidency and his war against crime indicates that the assessment of Duterte's intellectual supporters is highly plausible:

> "This collective approval signifies that most Filipinos do not see Duterte's exercise of political power as a threat to their freedom or to democracy at large, but rather as a source and sign of social security. […] In short, it is the people who have spoken: Duterte is the kind of leader that they want." (Itao 2018: 143)

Both the extent and the continuity of broad-based support for Duterte, including his war on crime, can be understood from the vantage point of Duterte representing a leadership persona, the assertive patron-strongman that is deemed highly legitimate despite its obvious conflict with the liberal-democratic model. It is perpetuated by the fact that Duterte is perceived as actually delivering good government for the people in a hierarchical setting where the patron-strongman decides and controls and thereby brings about both a higher level of welfare and also greater security for the people. Christopher Ryan Maboloc, an intellectual supporter of Duterte, argues that "Duterte remains extremely popular because Filipinos have faith in the idea that the present occupant of Malacañang possesses the important leadership attributes that previous presidents lacked" (Maboloc 2018: 82). For Maboloc these attributes boil down to "bravery to determine the destiny of a people weakened by regional divide, hopelessness, and confusion" and a willingness to enforce discipline and to emancipate the people "from the dictates of [Western, liberal-democratic; P.K.] cultural hegemony" (Maboloc 2018: 92–93).

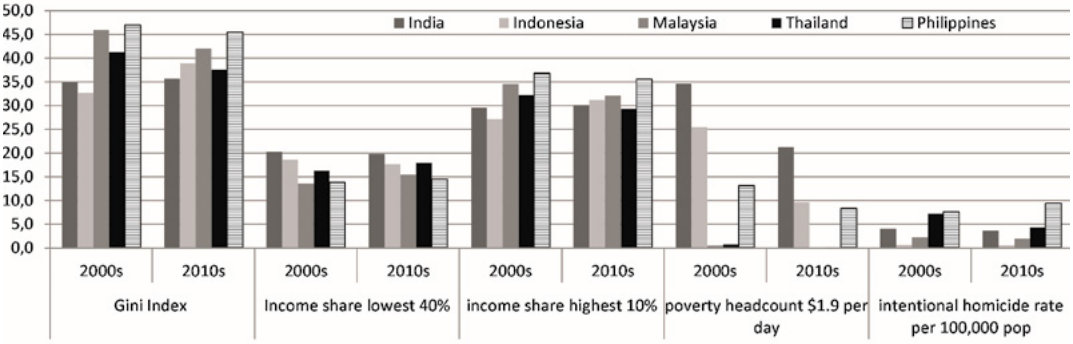
While these attributes can conveniently be summarized and dismissed as "authoritarian," and a return to "liberal democracy" demanded, this overlooks several important points. Firstly, while strongly supportive of electoral democracy, Filipinos and Filipinas simultaneously highly value relational clientelism as a mode of government and social organization. Secondly, from their perspective the alternative to Duterte is not full democracy and a liberal economic system that reduces poverty and inequality and brings about a fairly peaceful society, but a pre-Duterte Philippines that largely failed to bring about development, social justice and societal peace for three decades (on this, see below). It also overlooks the fact that at least the first three years of Duterte can be and are being read by many Filipinos and Filipinas as a relative success story. Finally, it overlooks the fact that Duterte can muster an exceptionally strong level of "street credibility," established during his quarter-century mayoralty in Davao City, and further consolidated during his presidency. Unlike his predecessors, he has managed to broaden this type of "street credibility" in a way that brings him support from both the middle and lower classes, even though they assess him and his government's performance from very different perspectives. At least for the moment, the liberal-democratic, rule-of-law and human rights focused perspective has clearly also lost much of its appeal for large sections of the educated middle class, who seem to be succumbing to the temptation of "authoritarian developmentalism" which is delivering security and welfare.

3.1 THE FAILURE OF FAÇADE LIBERAL DEMOCRACY IN PROVIDING FOR CORE HUMAN NEEDS

Three decades of democracy (1986–2016) have shown the Philippines to be an underachiever in many respects from a regional perspective. Compared to its direct neighbors from the old "western

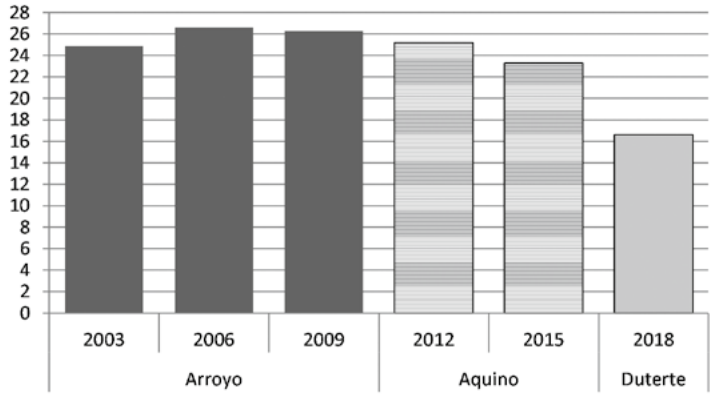
camp" (Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia) and India, the Philippines has the highest Gini value, the lowest share of income for the lowest 40% of the population (approx. the E class), the highest share for the top 10% (approx. ABC classes) and a very slow reduction of severe and mild poverty. Two of the Philippines's neighbors, Malaysia and Thailand, have reduced severe poverty to almost zero and the third, Indonesia, while starting from a much higher baseline at the end of the Suharto dictatorship, is reducing severe poverty much faster than the Philippines. Further, the Philippines tops all others with respect to intentional homicide (see Figure 7 below and in the online appendix).

Figure 7: Comparison of selected indicators for the Philippines and select Asian countries



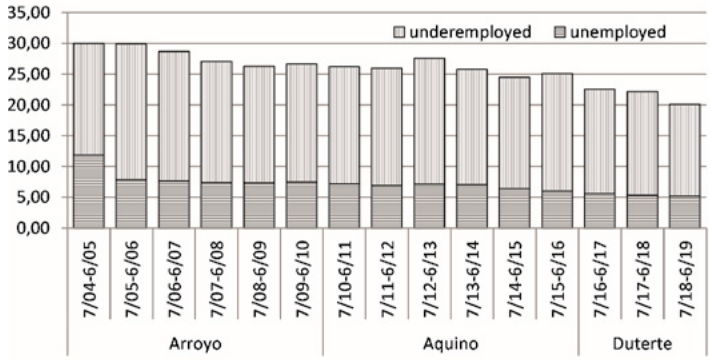
While failing in regional comparisons with respect to improvement over time, Philippine democracy is also failing when the focus is on domestic change during the past three decades from the downfall of Ferdinand Marcos in 1986 to the election of Rodrigo Duterte in 2016. While incidence of poverty has been reduced, the rate of reduction has been low. Poverty stood at 24.9% in 2003 and had only been reduced to 23.3% by 2015 (see Figure 8a below and in the online appendix in more detail).

Figure 8a: Poverty rate 2003-2018 (of population)



Similarly, the Aquino government did not succeed in achieving any significant reduction in underemployment and unemployment. While the former was cut by one percent from the last Arroyo year to the last Aquino year, the latter remained stable at about 19% (see Figure 8b below and with more detail in the online appendix).

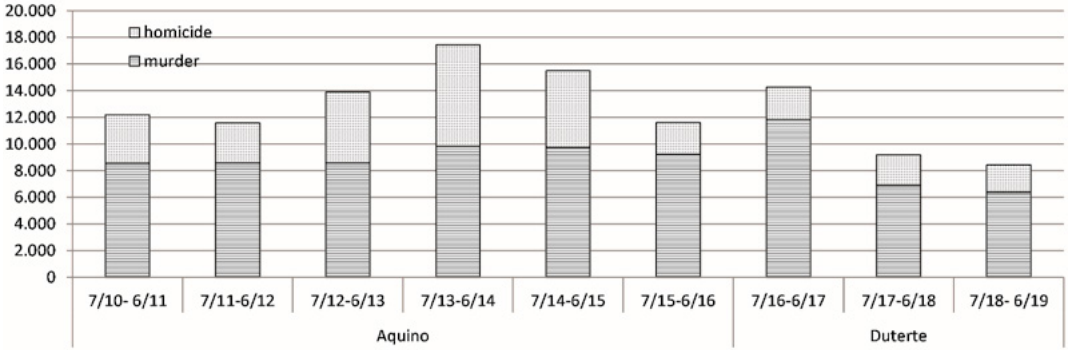
Figure 8b: Under- and Unemployment in the Philippines



The situation with respect to inequality is similar. Here, it is even possible to speak of three lost decades. Inequality actually initially rose under democratic auspices for more than a decade after the downfall of Marcos in 1988. After almost three decades of democratic government, the Philippine Gini value in 2015 is almost identical to what it was in 1985. By contrast, 15 years of dictatorship (1972–1986) resulted in the strongest reduction of inequality to date (for details, see Figure 9 in the online appendix).

Finally, given that security is one of the most basic human needs, it is important to look at this dimension too. The Philippines have the highest level of intentional homicide in the South and East Asian region. In the Philippines, close to 10,000 persons were murdered (excluding homicide) in 2014 and 2015. In neighboring Indonesia, 1,292 and 1,150 persons were intentionally killed (*pembunuhan*) in 2016 and 2017 (Badan Pusat Statistik 2019). If Indonesia were as violent as the Philippines this would mean more than 20,000 instead of 1,200 deaths or an increase of approximately 2,000%. Philippine crime-rate data are murky, but they make it possible to see that in the new millennium murder was lowest during the presidency of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (2001–2010; average number of murders: ~6,400). Numbers were higher during the Aquino administration, with an average of 9,228 murders per year (7/2010 to 6/2016; see Figure 10 below and Table 3 in the online appendix). Pre-Duterte s' developments in the Philippines were also disappointing in this respect.

Figure 10: Homicide in the Philippines 2010-2019



3.2 THE TRACK RECORD OF THE STRONGMAN-PRESIDENT

This murky track record of liberal democracy in the Philippines is the foil against which the Duterte presidency and illiberal democracy are perceived as a success story by the vast majority, and supported accordingly. One extraordinary signal in this respect has been the mid-term elections in May 2019, when the liberal-democratic and decidedly anti-Duterte slate of senatorial candidates (*Otso diretso*), despite significant support from the Catholic Church, did not win even one of the 12 senatorial seats that were to be filled. The voters made it clear that they did not want a new direction but to continue following the Duterte line by electing 9 candidates who explicitly stood for the HNP (Hugpong ng Pagbabago), a national alliance of parties initially founded in 2018 by Duterte's daughter Sara, clearly signaling their allegiance to the existing power (and probably the power to come). This is all the more important as *Otso diretso* declared this election a referendum on the Duterte government.

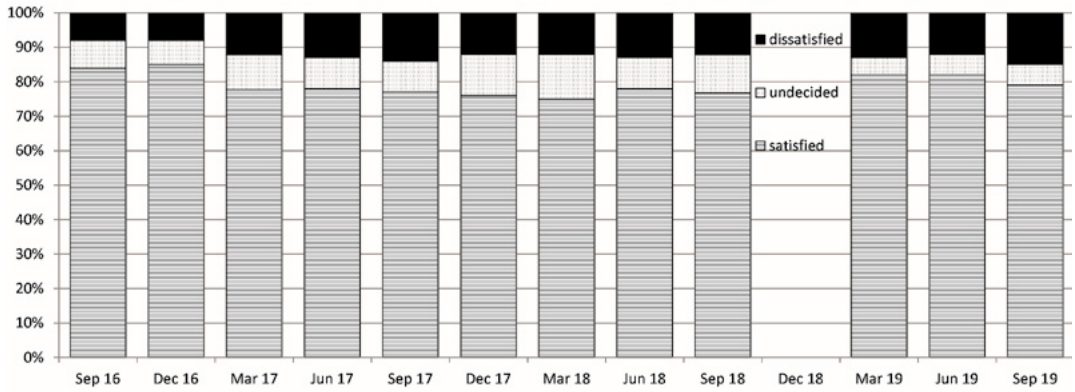
If we assume that personal security and physical integrity are core human needs, then majority support for Duterte is not really astonishing, as the Duterte anti-crime campaign can easily be presented as having succeeded in reducing most categories of crime (except for rape) to levels that had not been attained during the past decade.

While murder rose to close to 12,000 during the first year of Duterte (7/16–6/17; see Figure 10 above), it fell significantly to 6,914 and 6,424 in the subsequent two years. These latter values mark a longtime low for the Philippines. A similar and even more pronounced drop can be seen with respect to the more prevalent "everyday" forms of crime like robbery and theft, as well as physical injury, which have been cut by more than 50% when compared to Aquino's "best" (see Table 3 in the online appendix). These data are only partly reflected in the Social Weather Stations' quarterly surveys that include respondent families' assessments of their crime victimization experience in the previous 6 months. Here, the data suggest a stabilization of victimization experiences at the lowest level achieved during the Aquino presidency (7/14–6/15; see Figure 11 in the online appendix).

Even though the data are far from satisfying, the analysis nevertheless suggests that the reduction of crime is not necessarily the result of the Duterte anti-crime drive, but may be a continuation of a longer trend that goes back to the Aquino years. Despite this caveat, to many Filipinos and Filipinas the much-touted reduction in crime is proof that the law-and-order approach of the President is working at the national level as it had already done at the local level of Davao. Thus satisfaction "with the Administration in its campaign against illegal drugs" is overwhelming (approx. 80%), even though approximately three quarters of respondents confirmed that there had been many human rights abuses in the course of the campaign (see Figure 12 below and in the online appendix).

This perceived success in the core sphere of security is embedded in a wider perception of success, as, for example, the doubling of pay for most police officers and soldiers. Whereas during the six years of Aquino under- and unemployment were largely stagnant, they fell by more than 5% from the last year of Aquino to the third year of Duterte (see Figure 8b above and the online appendix for additional detail).

Figure 12: Satisfaction with the administration in its campaign against illegal drugs



After three decades the Gini coefficient declined below its 1988 value for the first time (see Figure 9 in the online appendix). Minimum wages rose slightly faster in the past few years than in the years preceding Duterte, the government is pushing a (much debated) fairly comprehensive tax reform program[19] and, most prominently, Duterte has initiated an ambitious infrastructure program ("Build, Build, Build"). Infrastructure spending more than doubled as a percentage of GDP from Aquino to Duterte (from 3.0% to 6.3%) and, for the first time in decades, was significantly higher than the fiscal deficit (Department of Budget and Management 2019). In addition, export growth was significantly higher for both goods and services in the first three years of Duterte compared with the last three years of Aquino (see Table 4 below and in the online appendix with additional detail).

	Aquino 2012/2013 to 2015/2016	Aquino 2015/2016 to Duterte 2018/2019
Goods (current prizes)	12.3	40.4
Goods (constant prices)	33.5	50.3
Services (current prizes)	39.7	49.7
Services (constant prizes)	30.3	34.8

Table 4: Three-year export growth rates in comparison - Aquino's last and Duterte's first

Even the IMF is supporting the Duterte administration's economic policies, from infrastructure strategy to tax reform (International Monetary Fund 2020). Locally highly valued government social policies are, for example, the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act (2017), which provides free tertiary education for all, and the Universal Health Care Law (2019) that intends to "auto-

19 Tax revenues rose during the past years by more than 14% per year. For a one-sided, yet informative, overview of the government's "successes" in various fields, see Office of the President 2019.

matically enroll every Filipino in the National Health Insurance Program" (Ranada 2019). Small wonder then that the net-satisfaction ratings for the Duterte administration clearly surpass those for the Aquino administration by at least 20% in all core policy fields (for details, see Figure 13 in the online appendix).

Duterte has also won the battle on truth and trust. If the biannual Philippine Trust Index is taken as an indication, trust in government institutions soared from 50% under Aquino in 2015 to 80% under Duterte in 2017. Among the government institutions, the Office of the President (OP) is the most trusted. Overall trust in the OP was stable between 2017 and 2019, rising slightly from 82% to 83%, with high levels of trust at 39% in 2017 and rising to more than 40% in 2019. Equally important is that under Duterte the remaining 20% who do not trust government institutions are to an overwhelming extent "neutral," with distrust expressed by no more than 5% of respondents. On the other hand, trust in the media, the NGOs and even the church has declined, signaling weakened trust in organized civil society (for details, see Figure 14 in the online appendix).

Summing up, it can be said that we are currently seeing a replication of the "Davao experience" at the national level. In Davao "the mayor's supposed involvement in the DDS [Davao Death Squad] is part of the collective imaginations about a heroic man who is not afraid to get his hands dirty to protect the city" (Breuil/Rozema 2009: 417; see also U.S. Manila Embassy 2009). These early assessments conform to a 2012 study that analyzed the local population's perception of Duterte's rule (Laya/Marquez 2012). While the local authors of the study succumbed to the local "Duterte fascination," their results are, nevertheless, clear-cut. Duterte's core philosophy that peace and order are the foundation of development was as broadly shared as was the idea that Davao City needed an iron-fisted policy of crime control. In various more recent surveys in Davao City, a strong majority of respondents openly argued that the Davao Death Squad (DDS) can help solve criminality, whereas only a small minority voiced human rights concerns (Diaz et al. 2015: 108).

While the tough crime-control approach provides the core of the public's approval of Duterte and his administration in both Davao and the Philippines, this would not suffice, were it not for the broadly shared impression that the city/country are doing well in many other dimensions of government and development. In this respect it is important to note that a majority of respondents in Davao consistently agrees that there is a widening gap between the rich and the poor in their city and 80% of the respondents argue that the local government has a responsibility to close the gap. From the respondents' perspective, the local government has managed decidedly well in this respect. The same surveys showed that throughout the past years Davao citizens felt that there had been continued improvement, with large or even very large improvements in public infrastructure (approx. 60%-80%) and in public services (approx. 55%-80%) and hold very positive perceptions of the local economy. Approximately 90% agree that the local government "addresses the concerns of the ordinary people." Small wonder that former mayor Rodrigo and current mayor Sara Duterte have satisfaction ratios of up to 99% (Diaz et al. various surveys). More impressive is that the City Council and the barangay officials also achieved satisfaction ratings of 70% and 90%.

3.3 THE NEW AUTONOMY OF THE REGULAR GUY ON MAIN STREET AND THE ROLE OF MAIN STREET CREDIBILITY

Like it or not, the majority has emancipated itself from the liberal-democratic educated elite's claim to being the authority when it comes to determining what constitutes good government. By making illiberal alternatives taboo, the liberal-democratic discourse left its opponents voiceless, as they were declared morally inferior and in need of democratic enlightenment and education.

Before Duterte this taboo had failed only once, when Joseph Estrada, champion of the poor, was elected President in 1998. Yet, he was in due course removed extra-constitutionally and jailed in 2001 by an alliance of civil society, the big business sector (Makati Business Club), the powerful Catholic church,[20] key government officials, the vice-president and the armed forces on charges of corruption. When about a million urban poor protested this move for days at the EDSA shrine, this was perceived as a revolt of the mob, of the "great unwashed" (Mojares 2006). The Catholic Bishops Conference took no note of the political concerns of the masses, but bewailed that "the shrine has been desecrated by all the filth, vandalism and foul words" (priest quoted by Araneta 2001a). The establishment forces, the educated "civil society and the Church" successfully denied legitimacy to such self-determined efforts of "uncivil society" to determine their own future, upholding the notion that "People Power should […] be conducted by constituents who had a morally valid agenda" (Bautista 2006: 303). Support for the deposed president was thus not categorized as a "revolution" but a "rebellion" undertaken by a mob consisting of paid members of the "great unwashed" "with no political or moral will of their own, but […] rather instruments manipulated by opposition politicians" (Bautista 2006: 305). Until Duterte, the exclusionary and tutelary attitude of civil society toward the uncivil society of the masses successfully dictated the "prevailing norms of discourse." The masses' "lack of such fitness [in the appropriate discourse] is cause to discount, or at least mediate, the democratic right to speak and be heard." Put differently, up to Duterte we find a "symbolic domination of a self-styled modern sector endowed with the authority (cultural capital) to 'define the situation' and the resources to objectify their definition" (quotes above: Garrido 2008: 456). The educated middle class thus in effect deprived the poor of their membership in the community of political adults and recast them as a "wayward child who must be tolerated and indulged" (Bautista 2006: 30) on account of its lack of "civic competence" (Garrido 2008: 456).

Like Estrada before him, Duterte has been ridiculed and disdained by the educated intellectual proponents of the middle class and their representatives in the national media on account of his coarse language and brutal imagery. Appalling to the refined tastes of the educated classes, this

20 Official church support by the Catholic Bishops Conference (CBCP) of the Philippines for the overthrow of the Estrada government was so strong that the Vatican had to officially remind the CBCP that "respect should be accorded for the Constitution and for the legal processes as well as for the office of the president since these […] cannot simply be discarded or tampered with regardless of who holds office as long as he was elected freely and fairly by the people" (Vatican cable, quoted in: Araneta 2000). This exhortation was to no avail, as the CBCP became the leading normative power legitimizing first the extralegal dismissal of Estrada and then the appointment of his successor Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. It is certainly an irony of history that this shining light of good government that was praised for her "trust in the power of prayer and goodness innate in every human being" by Cardinal Sin (quoted in: Araneta 2001b) was perceived as the most corrupt Philippine leader only three years later Reuters 2007).

same language is broadly supported by the vast majority of the people – at least in Duterte's hometown of Davao, where 27% of respondents are strongly and a further 48% simply in favor of the "choice of words of the President" (Diaz et al. 2017: 163). As a jeepney driver in Manila says: "I like hearing Duterte speaks…it is almost like I am the one speaking" (quoted in Arguelles 2019: 428).

However, this report should have shown that reducing these voters to more or less voiceless followers of a cunning politician in need of education in democracy and human rights misses a crucial point. Those voters who applaud Duterte's choice of words also harbor a vision of political leadership that not only makes the violence-prone strongman their champion, but also includes less violent alternatives to the leadership persona exemplified by Duterte. When asked for their choice of important leadership traits for politicians from President to barangay official (Diaz et al. 2017: 121–126) most Davao respondents chose categories that spell out the good patron, i.e., caring, respectful, achievement-oriented and stern. At the core is a set of personal characteristics: sincerity (>85%), fairness, integrity, concern for the oppressed and poor, and approachability (<80%), benevolence, credibility and a clean reputation (~75%) follow next. Crucial, and a signal for the modernity of attitudes, is the extraordinary role which gender sensitivity plays (>85%). Such personal qualities are, however, far from sufficient. Davao citizens also pay attention to performance, as they mention that the candidate should have a sufficient track record of success (projects implemented; >85%) and ought to be a tough achiever, who is strict and consistent in implementing laws and tough with law violators (~85%). It is important to understand that Duterte is *one radical* version of a much broader panoply of political leadership personae that fit the requirement of majority public approval.

With Duterte, the lower classes have decisively emancipated themselves from the normative leadership of the educated middle class. But, obviously a large portion of the "middle class" has also shifted its allegiance to a politician with strong "street credibility." Unlike Estrada, Duterte delivers on his promises, and in addition his promises appeal not only to the poor, but to the middle class as well. Thirdly, by Philippine standards Duterte is incorruptible, whereas Estrada was a paradigmatic representative of the corrupt "trapo."[21] Although they come from two different sides, both the middle class and the poor have settled on supporting the patron-strongman, who delivers, or, in the words of Kusaka (2017b: 49), the "patriarchal boss" who brings together "compassion and violence" and "maintains justice outside of the law."

What seems to unite the majority of Filipinos and Filipinas is a yearning for discipline and order enforced by external mechanisms of social control. This is as true for the anti-drug war as it is for the multitude of local ordinances in Davao City, from the speed-limit ordinance, to the anti-smoking and anti-discrimination ordinances, the liquor ban, the anti-nuisance regulations, to anti-jaywalking or garbage segregation and waste disposal ordinances, all of which are strictly enforced in Davao City. In all of these respects Duterte takes (personal) responsibility, fundamentally in line with the persona of both the caring patron and the strongman. This willingness to take personal and complete respon-

21 Trapo has a double meaning as a loanword from the Spanish, it stands for a cleaning rag; it can also be read as an abbreviation for "traditional politician," generally perceived as highly corrupt, making false promises and only interested in his own and his family's perpetuation in power (for collections of Filipinos' understandings of Trapo see Philstar 2009 and Philstar 2010).

sibility for all decisions is a further important dimension of Duterte's Main Street credibility, where the lower and the middle class eventually meet. Such a politician assumes responsibility for decisions many of the poor and middle class would not openly support but are willing to tolerate if somebody else can be held responsible, such as the killing of drug suspects. Duterte provides a "solution" to a pressing problem and simultaneously absolves the relieved community of guilt by taking all the responsibility upon himself:

> What is my sin? Did I steal even one peso? Did I prosecute somebody who I ordered jailed? My sin is extrajudicial killings […] Extrajudicial killing? I will do the explanation in public for international release if you want. For the things that really happened […] [to] the criminals and the police in operations – punitive operations, police action – I am willing to answer [to] all of them. I assume full responsibility for what happened because I was the one who ordered it (Duterte quoted in: Human Rights Watch 2018).

Currently, both the poor and the regular guy on Main Street may at the same time support the brutal crackdown on crime while distancing and absolving themselves from the extralegal killings as Duterte personally claims all the responsibility and shoulders the blame. According to one local slum-dweller quoted by Arguelles (2019: 426):

> "This is what you get from a president who is serious… We knew this was going to happen… And he repeatedly warned all of us… We have always thought that it is rare for politicians to fulfil their election promise and… there he is." Several of her neighbors, listening the whole time, nodded in full agreement.

Garrido (2019) argues that for the urban middle class Duterte was and is a promise of the broadening of "pockets of discipline" as Davao is perceived in the Philippines by the country as a whole:

> "The middle class have been waiting for someone like Duterte for some time now. […] the drug war is not just at drug dealers and users but at a disorderly public generally. […] Many [in civil society] subscribe to a vision of order as being imposed from above and not without great human cost."

4. CONCLUSION: THE NEXT ELECTION IN 2022 AND BEYOND

The Pandora's Box of popularly elected strongman presidents has been opened in the Philippines. Worse, from a liberal democratic perspective, the current local turned national strongman is perceived as a highly capable leader, who assertively works not only to stamp out crime and provide security for the broad masses of the people, but who is also perceived as successful in other crucial fields of politics by the poor and the middle class alike. With Duterte came a new form of "street cred-

ibility" and legitimacy that emancipated itself from the liberal-democratic frame that has dominated Philippine national level politics since the downfall of Ferdinand Marcos.

One important lesson remains to be internalized by liberal democrats in the Philippines and elsewhere: if democracy is widely perceived as not delivering the core human needs of security, development and justice, its promises of individual freedom and human rights lose their appeal.

Equally important is that democracy and democrats deliver the human need of belonging and model their behavior and message in a way that links up with the affective needs of the electorate. After Duterte the old strategies of marginalizing and ridiculing non-mainstream politicians as country bumpkins will no longer work, as long as these people signal authenticity and recognition of the broad masses of the people and can plausibly demonstrate strong and successful leadership qualities. Similarly, criticism of such leadership as illiberal is bound to fail in the wake of broad public support on account of his leadership's perceived multi-dimensional success.

The analysis above has shown that support for Duterte rests on three pillars: his leadership persona is clearly within the bandwidth of culturally appropriate role models for local politics. He is a caring patron, down-to-earth and approachable, at the same time devoid of the veil of etiquette, and authentic instead. He is simultaneously a highly assertive and action-oriented strongman. In this double role he tends to both the security and welfare needs of the vast majority of the people. Thus, his success is based on his convincing embodiment of government *for* the people in the form of the caring patron-strongman or patriarchal boss. This dual pillar of patronage and strongmanship is supplemented by a third pillar: i.e., perceived success with respect to policy output and outcome. Duterte was convincing initially because of public perceptions of his accomplishments in Davao City and his promise to nationalize this local success story. He has broadened his support by making good on the majority of his promises within a fairly short time. Other than the other "outsider" in the presidential office, President Joseph Estrada (1998–2001), Duterte was not molded in the hallways of "Imperial Manila,"[22] but is a "pure" local politician. With him a new alternative path to the presidential office has been cleared that may enable future bottom-up processes of political reform deriving from local experiences.

With the coronavirus outbreak there are no more "safe guesses" on Duterte's future, as in all probability Corona will dramatically influence the Philippine economy and society and erase many of the current dynamics perceived to be determining the future stance of the people on the Duterte regime. With all probability the post-Corona domestic assessment of Duterte will to a large extent hinge on his management of the crisis caused by the virus. Should his management of the Corona crisis be perceived as fairly successful in hindsight, several fundamental constants of post-Marcos and pre-Duterte Philippine democracy will be obsolete: that presidents come from Luzon as well as that future presidents ought to have had a great deal of prior experience in the corridors of power in

22 Imperial Manila is a widely used "shortcut" signaling the overwhelming political, economic and social centrality of the wider Manila area that dominates the rest of the Philippines (on current discussions, see Tusalem 2019, Mendoza/Ocampo 2017; Lasco 2015).

"Imperial Manila" as a senator (Macapagal Arroyo, Joseph Estrada, Benigno Aquino) or member of government (Fidel Ramos). If Duterte is perceived as failing in the Corona crisis, most probably the Manila-centric pre-Duterte mainstream will re-grasp the helm of government.

It is still a long way to the 2022 elections. However, it is already obvious that there will be no Duterte 2.0. Duterte himself cannot be reelected due to term-limit rules. Duterte is neither a replica of Ferdinand Marcos nor a mirror image of Vladimir Putin and it is highly unlikely that he will extend his presidency by either resorting to martial law or tampering with the constitution. Any effort to copy him is bound to fail, as his electoral success was highly dependent on the public's perception of Duterte's Davao "success story." Luckily, his extreme type of extralegal crime control has been unique, and there is no similar successor in sight.

Given the absence of a promising liberal-democratic alternative for the 2022 elections and in light of public preferences for a "good patron-strongman," the best that can be hoped for is a candidate who can credibly stand as a reliable patron who cares for the poor and the middle class alike; a patron, who is perceived as having been successful in the past, delivering on his promises, assertive with an explicit focus on law and order, a strong pro-poor and social justice stance that translates into social improvement at the local level, but without the extralegal excesses of Duterte.

Currently Duterte's daughter Sara is the leading contender to succeed her father if the pollsters are to be believed. She is the leader in a field of 23 possible candidates with a stunning 35.1% of respondents, followed by Grace Poe[23] with 11% and Francisco "Isko" Moreno Domagoso with 7.8% (Publicus Asia 2019).[24] With Sara Duterte-Carpio and Isko Moreno, the new mayor of Manila City, two of the three top scorers do not belong to the established circles of "Imperial Manila." The two share youth, a vast amount of experience in local politics and a caring but decisive brand of leadership. Both are charismatic figures who combine authority with strong "Main Street credibility," display a hands-on style of political leadership, and share a strict focus on discipline, law and order.

23 Grace Poe is the adopted daughter of actor and 2004 presidential candidate Fernando Poe. She has been a member of the Philippine senate since 2013, when she ran as an independent under the banner of Aquino's Team PNoy and with the support of a left-leaning coalition of party-list parties and won with the highest number of votes. In 2019 she was reelected as senator with the second highest number of votes.

24 Isko Moreno has the strongest internet presence on Twitter (*https://twitter.com/IskoMoreno*), instagram (*https://www.instagram.com/isko_moreno/*) and especially on Facebook (*https://www.facebook.com/iskomorenodomagoso/*) with more than 3.2 million followers, broadly equal to Grace Poe (with 3.3 million followers on Facebook). Both are far beyond Sara Duterte who currently has less than 55,000 followers.

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Since Rodrigo Duterte was elected President of the Philippines in 2016, he is responsible for the killing of thousands of Philippine citizens in his war on drugs, threatened political opponents and increasingly undermines crucial political freedoms. International media condemn his government as oppressive and illiberal, at the same time surveys show that the vast majority of the country's population supports Duterte's law and order politics.
In this report, Peter Kreuzer explores how a rogue politician could become the most popular president in years. He gives insights into Philippine clientelistic politics, political elites and Filipinos' desire for a politician who puts his promises into action.

Dr Peter Kreuzer is a senior researcher in PRIF's research department "Intrastate Conflict". In his research he focuses on Philippine domestic politics, violence in multiethnic societies and maritime conflicts in East and Southeast Asia.

PETER KREUZER //

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ISBN 978-3-946459-53-8

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